



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 5 MAY 2024- EASTER 6**

COLLECT

God our redeemer,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,
so by his continual presence in us he may raise us
to eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Psalm 98

- 1 Sing to the Lord a new song, ♦
for he has done marvellous things.
- 2 His own right hand and his holy arm ♦
have won for him the victory.
- 3 The Lord has made known his salvation; ♦
his deliverance has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.
- 4 He has remembered his mercy and faithfulness
towards the house of Israel, ♦
and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
- 5 Sound praises to the Lord, all the earth; ♦
break into singing and make music.
- 6 Make music to the Lord with the lyre, ♦
with the lyre and the voice of melody.
- 7 With trumpets and the sound of the horn ♦
sound praises before the Lord, the King.
- 8 Let the sea thunder and all that fills it, ♦
the world and all that dwell upon it.
- 9 Let the rivers clap their hands ♦
and let the hills ring out together before the Lord,
for he comes to judge the earth.
- 10 In righteousness shall he judge the world ♦
and the peoples with equity.

Acts 10.44-48

Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, 'Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from John, chapter 15, verses 9-17.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel and it is introduced with an Acclamation, as below:

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

This is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Alleluia!

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John, chapter 15, verses 9-17.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

John 15.9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

A Reflection from Hannah...

'Abide in my love' is such an evocative phrase, and in its own way is an expression of our deepest prayer as well as our deepest reality. A bit of an old-fashioned word, 'abide' is about home- it's about where we belong at our most fundamental level. We belong to God- who is our true home, and it is a basic tenet of our faith- we exist because God's love sustains us. If that love disappeared, so would we.

At the clergy conference last week, we were challenged to think of prayer as a longing for home. Bishop Michael spoke so movingly about the loss of his son Frank last autumn, and he used Psalm 84 as a way of doing this. The beautiful thing about Psalm 84 is that it begins and ends with God's home. Verse 1 says:

'How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts'

And then very near the end, verse 10 says:

*'For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of the wicked.'*

Or, put differently (and to quote Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz), there's no place like home! To abide in God is to rest in all the things of love- as Jesus describes in our Gospel reading, love that looks to the other, love that is prepared to die for another, love that makes joy complete, love that flows from the true vine into our lives. When we live in that kind of love, we really are home.

So how does that link to the idea of prayer as a longing for home? Well, when we pray we are expressing our hopes for a fuller life of love. Sometimes this comes via memories of good things we used to know (so often our idea of 'home' is deeply shaped by our earliest experiences); sometimes this comes from a place of absolute desolation where any sense of hope feels too remote to consider and we feel very much in the tents of the wicked. Whatever the starting point, what we are doing is crying out to God for the stuff of heaven to break in and dwell with us. And as the psalmist puts it, because God's home is what we are made for, even just a day there is better than a lifetime in the wilderness.